



Duval County Public Schools

August 19, 2014, Committee Meeting - Board Workshop

Ms. Becki Couch, Chairman
Ms. Cheryl Grymes, Vice-Chairman
Mr. Jason Fischer
Dr. Constance S. Hall
Ms. Ashley Smith Juarez
Mr. Fred "Fel" Lee
Mr. Ms. Paula D. Wright
Dr. Nikolai Vitti, Superintendent

ATTENDANCE AT THIS COMMITTEE MEETING AND WORKSHOP OF THE DUVAL COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD: All Board Members were present. Dr. Nikolai Vitti, Superintendent, and Ms. Karen Chastain, Chief of Legal Services, were also present.

Call Meeting To Order

[CALL MEETING TO ORDER](#)

Minutes:

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 9:08 a.m.

Items To Be Discussed

[1. GOVERNANCE](#)

Minutes:

The following topics were discussed during Governance:

- Chairman Couch submitted a BMR that the Board be provided with a comparison of the tentative budget recently approved by the Board vs. changes and/or amendments that have occurred since it was approved. The Superintendent asked for examples. Chairman Couch indicated that it would include such items as Cabinet add on items; funds moved from one area to another; changes to the Staff Allocation Plan, etc. He will start providing Board members with a summary of those discussions. Board Member Hall would like to see clarity on where the money will come from for any changes after the budget is approved.
- Board Member Lee arrived at the meeting at 9:24 a.m.
- The Superintendent discussed some of the conversations with Principals during the PACT meetings, both issues and solutions.
- Board Member Wright asked if there were any discussions on addressing what is going on with students in the home and community. Dr. Vitti shared that this area did need to be addressed, and some suggested strategies were more Parent Academy classes, Saturday school, having principals and staff more involved in the community, and having a higher visibility in the community.
- The Board took a short break and went to the Duval County Council PTA meeting in the Board Room, where Chairman Couch welcomed members to a new school year.
- Board Member Fischer left the meeting at 9:47 a.m.
- Board Member Juarez talked about G. W. Carver Elementary School and how their discipline issues have declined in the past few years. She asked that this be added to Chairman Couch's request on what the consistency and opportunity is across the district for the same resources that helped this school address their discipline issues.
- There was more discussion on PACT meetings and Principals sharing what they needed to help their students academically. Board Member Juarez asked that it be made clear to all Principals in the meetings that they can request resources that involve dollars. Some think they cannot ask for things that require dollars or a trade-off.
- Board Member Lee shared a question for Board Member Fischer in his absence. Board Member Fischer has concerns that the Board is not receiving the printed agenda on the Thursday before the Workshop, as has been requested. Dr. Vitti said it was available on line on Thursday, but the Board run was on Friday.
- Board Member Hall shared with the Board that she and Chairman Couch had discussed the next Board Development meeting. They talked about protocol and looked at samples from other districts, which Dr. Hall will share with the Board.
- Board Member Grymes arrived at the meeting at 10:10 a.m.
- Board Member Hall asked about training for front office staff at schools to be more parent friendly. Dr. Vitti shared that some was offered last year that was a combined effort of Wellness, the office of Equity and Inclusion, and HRS. They have decided to hire an outside company to handle customer service, as well as a secret shopper service. Dr. Hall asked that we focus on the QEA schools and utilize what staff had prepared for last year.
- The next Board Development meeting was scheduled for September 22, 2014. It will be an all day session and start at 9:00 a.m.
- The Superintendent asked that if we have meetings in the future that will not take all day, that we consider starting at 1:00 pm. This would allow him to visit schools in the mornings.

- Board Member Wright shared that it was good to see a lot of volunteers in the schools on the first day.
- Board Member Juarez commented that the Board would be losing their assistant, Bonnie Susan Cole, a little sooner than expected to retirement. She would like for the Board to consider moving the Constituent Services System and the Board Member Request system back to the Board office and have her operate the systems like they were in the past. She has spoken to several former Board Members who have all commented on how well it worked and complimented the fluidity and communications aspects of the systems. She would like to see the current system contain some of the elements it used to have. She also shared that we would be losing a lot of institutional knowledge when she leaves, so this is a time sensitive opportunity. Ms. Cole explained how the systems had operated in the past, and shared internal protocols for both systems. A copy of these documents are attached to the Minutes. In the past, issues would be assigned to the appropriate division head, via the CS or BMR system. In the case of CS issues, the division head would respond to the constituent, close out the issue, and an e-mail would be generated to the appropriate Board Member(s) with the original concern and the response. For BMR's, the request would be sent to the appropriate division head and Superintendent. The response would be prepared by the division head and signed off on by the Superintendent prior to providing to the Board. The issue would then be closed out in the system in the same manner as CS issues. The main difference now is that both CS & BMR issues would be assigned to the Superintendent/Chief of Staff, who would then refer to staff, who would prepare the response and provide to the Superintendent/Chief of Staff to respond to the constituent/Board Member. Chairman Couch said there were times when she needed an issue researched, and it would be difficult because Bonnie would not have been provided with the information, and the person currently assisting with these systems is not their employee. Vice-Chairman Grymes asked if copying her would solve this, to which the Chairman indicated that it would, but that does not happen. Board Member Juarez shared that the Board has had this discussion several times. The previous system was not broken, and was even used as a model by CRSS and Bonnie has presented at several conferences, and it had been exported to other districts. Board Member Lee said it was a good idea to have more than one person familiar with the system. Board Member Hall indicated that it would be extremely helpful to be able to call their staff regarding issues. The consensus was to move both of these systems back to the Board Office staff.
- Vice-Chairman Grymes asked when Bonnie would be retiring. She will retire October 31, 2014. Chairman Couch reminded the Board that they had talked about how they would like the position structured. Vice-Chairman Grymes shared that Ms. Sonita Young, Chief of Human Resource Services, had suggested it be changed to a Technical Support position. The Chairman said that the Board needed to decide what they wanted the position to do, and that they had discussed two people, one of which would be responsible for the community outreach portion of the job. Ms. Cole suggested that the candidate be a current employee, who would have knowledge of the school system, and who would be able to get up to speed in a short time. The Chairman will get with Ms. Young and ask that this be fast-tracked. The Chairman reminded the Board and Superintendent that the two Board office staff positions were to be moved under

the Board.

- The Board set a date for the Vicky Olson and Michael Green cases to be heard. The date selected was September 8, 2014, from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- The data for the Council of Great City Schools request regarding discipline and race and ethnicity will be added to the September 9, 2014, Board Workshop.
- Topics for future Workshops include Minority Business; Middle School Reform; Marketing, and QZAB II.
- The Strategic Plan goals will be discussed at our next Board Development meeting.
- Board Member Fischer returned at 11:00 a.m.
- The Board broke for lunch at 11:00 a.m.

[2. SEPTEMBER 2, 2014, DRAFT AGENDA REVIEW](#)

Minutes:

The Superintendent reviewed the September 2, 2014, Draft Agenda with the Board. Discussion included the following:

- The Board reconvened from lunch at 12:00 p.m.
- Board Member Wright left at 12:00 p.m.
- Board Member Grymes was not present.
- Academics Item 2 - Dual Enrollment - Chairman Couch asked about the books; the Superintendent shared that it was a complex issue, but that parents and students needed to be more responsible and have accountability for books. Dr. Hall said this would be especially important and a challenge with the electronic devices.
- Academics Item 6 - Team Up - Dr. Vitti indicated they came to a compromise on the data requirements, and there would be more ownership at the school level. Board Member Juarez asked about strategies for recruiting students. Board Member Hall said that messaging was important on alignment and coordination and asked what support middle schools would receive to beef up and target more students. Dr. Vitti shared that there would be more ownership by principals of the students needing help.
- Academics 5 - Tuition - The Superintendent will address the off campus issue. All four schools have transportation provided this year
- Academics 7 - Literacy Plan - Board members will review the plan and send their questions to the Superintendent. The plan was not added to the agenda until this morning.
- Academics 8 - QEA - Board members will review and send their questions to the Superintendent.
- HRS 11 - Minimum Qualifications - Director - Health - This position will be funded by the Chartrand Foundation and it is his plan to place Teri Cicero in this position and advertise her current position. The Director will report to Dana Kriznar.
- Board Member Grymes returned at 12:50 p.m.
- HRS 11 - Continued - Board Member Juarez asked about a business model and sustainability, since this position would be funded by an outside source. The

Superintendent indicated that there would be a plan by the end of the year.

- HRS 12 - Minimum Qualifications - Food Service - Chairman Couch shared that Florida Statutes indicated this position should have a Masters Degree. Dr. Vitti indicate HR was looking into this and will follow up.
- HRS 13 - JROTC - The Superintendent said we would also revisit how we restructured pay for Principals because of free and reduced price lunch.
- Operations 18 - Five Year Plan - Board Member Juarez requested that the superintendent provide Bonnie with the lasted Refresh plan to share with the Board. Board Member Hall asked how we prioritize covered walkways. Mr. Paul Soares, Assistant Superintendent of Operations, shared that we look at the greatest benefit for the least amount of money, and that we look at elementary schools first. Replacement of portables also comes out of this fund. We currently have a \$17 million backlog. Board Member Hall asked about printers for schools. Most are purchased through school based budgets. There is also centralized printers in schools, and staff can also electronically submit print jobs to Bulls Bay.
- Chairman Couch suggested that we plan a tour of Bulls Bay so that those on the Board who have not seen the facility can appreciate the work performed by that staff.
- Operations 26 - Fundraisers - Chairman Couch asked that we ensure fairness by activity directors for all groups in the schools and not just football. Board Member Juarez would like to see groups pursue healthy options for fundraisers and not junk food. Board Member Lee suggested that staff engage PTA and other school based groups on alternative fund raising options.
- General 28 - Chapter 7 Policy Changes - Chairman Couch provided an overview of the proposed changes. Discussion was held on the dollar amount in 7.41. After discussion, it was decided that the amount would be changed from \$50,000 to \$75,000. Most districts in Florida have either of these amounts, however, none go to the \$100,000 level that is in the current policy. The \$50,000 was recommended to align with wording in Florida Statutes. During the policy review, the effort was to align our policies with Statutes. In 7.10, Chairman Couch asked that we change may to shall.
- Added Item - School Choice - Item 10 - Scholar Preparatory Charter School - The Superintendent distributed a proposed agenda item for discussion on a 90 day termination for this Charter school. They were scheduled to open last year but requested a delay. They have not reached the goal of the number of students needed to run the school this year. They will have an opportunity to provide staff with information on how they can maintain the school with their limited enrollment. Staff was to visit the school today, and the Superintendent will provide the Board with a report on the results of that visit.

Adjournment

[ADJOURNMENT](#)

Minutes:

The Chairman adjourned the meeting at 3:22 p.m.

BSC

We Agree on this

Superintendent

Chairman